



CREATIVE BEINGS

Cultivating creative practices for wellbeing

Annual Impact & Reach Report to 31st Dec 2021

What is Creative Beings CIC?

Creative Beings CIC devises and runs creative activities, workshops, practices and / or processes that work with people to develop and enhance their wellbeing. We often work in and with nature and enjoy the natural surroundings of garden, woodland, field and stream here. By paying attention to the pace of what we do, as well as hosting the creative spaces carefully, the natural processes of human wellbeing have a chance to emerge and embed.

Additionally, when we express ourselves and are heard, we feel better about ourselves. This process can contribute to higher self-esteem, more participation and stronger wellbeing.

Our creative interventions include conversational retreats e.g. a 1-day programme to explore our feelings around our place in the world. Groups can take part in facilitated conversation, sometimes in pairs, sometimes as a group, as well as mindfulness practices. A day might include a walk in woodland, for inspiration and connection to nature, self and others.

Creative Beings CIC also works with musicians, dancers and performers to create opportunities for them to share their work with audiences who might not normally experience these art forms. There is very much a two-way flow as the audiences and performers gain from their explorations and experiences with each other.

How has the community benefited from Creative Beings CIC in 2021?

2021 was another strange year due to Covid-enforced lockdown. We had to postpone many events and reduce numbers due to social-distancing. However, we implemented our most ambitious social outreach projects yet: '[Resurgo](#)' (I Rise Again) and '[Scension](#)', supporting creative interventions that helped people to connect, process and sense-make. This integrated creative outreach project is inspired by the thought that what is now will come to pass... and that an ending can be a new beginning. This universal theme has been particularly relevant during Covid and COP26.

The project explores the theme of hope with groups from very different backgrounds, facilitating them to connect, co-create and increase personal sense of worth. We encouraged some who were unfamiliar with 'art' to be able to engage without being threatened or having their anxieties raised (e.g. "How will I feel if I don't 'get it'?"). We experimented with a multi-

platform approach, exploring hope through sculpture, music, dance, community workshops and public engagement via the [Tree Of Hope](#).

We commissioned a dance soundtrack from a young composer and shared it with South West dance organisations (contemporary, ballet, learning disabilities, young, old). This led to a day of dance in Exeter Cathedral with 14 performances. You can see highlights here:

- [Prism Project performance](#)
- [Medley of 6 acts' highlights](#)

In Exeter, Honiton and Paignton, we facilitated 17 Creative Wellbeing Workshops with charities supporting clients with learning difficulties (United Response) and brain injuries (Headway Devon). Inspired by the *Scension* dance video, we co-created artworks that were turned into thousands of 'leaves of hope'. These were displayed on the Tree Of Hope that visited Exeter Cathedral, Hospital and University.

There is a listing of the key outcomes and impacts in the appendix to this report.

The Creative Wellbeing Workshops were made possible through funds generated by Creative Beings courses, as well as generous grants from The Arts Council, The Network For Social Change and the David Gibbons Foundation.

In addition to the [Resurgo](#) / [Scension](#) integrated arts project, we have run a few [courses and events](#) in the gaps between lockdowns. Some of the highlights included:

Root & Branch - Lines. Creative writing with Chris Waters

What?	Creative writing inspired by an exploration of the companionship of trees, woods, their world and our experience of / relationship to it.
When?	25 th July
Impact?	11 participants, 1 artist, 1 helper

Villages In Action - Jack Dean & Company + Over The Hill

What?	Supporting rural touring theatre with an open-air production
When?	13 th Aug
Impact?	51 visitors, 8 musicians

Honiton Carers creative group

What?	Time and space for carers to focus on their own needs and explore through creative practice.
When?	6 sessions ending with wreath-making on 24 th Nov
Impact?	20 participants, 2 tutors

Foraging & Preserving [courses](#)

What?	Tutored course on identifying and preserving things to eat from the natural world, co-led by a survival/foraging tutor and a botanist
When?	23-25 Apr, 3-5 Sep
Impact?	20 + 16 participants, 2 tutors

These events, and others, were appreciated and valued in different ways by the different participating groups. We look forward to co-creating more in 2022 and beyond.

In keeping with our Articles of Association, the Directors of Creative Beings do not take profits out of the CIC. Rather, the organisation generates a surplus to spend on social outreach events for under-served communities.



Sue Holland, Martin Staniforth, Alex Staniforth, Jan Campbell Young, Rosemarie Boon
Directors of Creative Beings CIC

Appendix

Outcomes and impacts – *Scension* dance programme

1. The dance opportunity was over-subscribed and we selected 7 dance organisations to receive input from professional choreographers. This led to a day of dance in Exeter Cathedral with 14 performances. One group included dancers aged 5 and 80. This was the first time they had worked in an inter-generational way.
2. Two artist facilitators re-kindled their confidence to facilitate groups again.
3. One choreographer has been employed as a dance school instructor.
4. Two dancers from Exeter have been picked up by a London talent agency.
5. Two other dancers from Plymouth commented that they would never have dreamed of performing in such a prestigious location as Exeter Cathedral. Who knows where the boost of this experience will take them?
6. One dancer, in her 70s, commented that the last time she performed in public was when she was in school. This experience gave her a renewed appreciation of the 2-way dynamic between performer and audience.
7. An emerging textile artist took up the opportunity to design and make the costumes for the professional dance organisation, echoing the sculptures.
8. In a Headway workshop, when 'making marks to music', the group watched a film of the Scension dance. Support Worker Bex commented that "I wouldn't normally search

for that kind of film or dance online but that was really beautiful and absorbing – it's opened my eyes."

9. In all of the Creative Wellbeing Workshops, clients were totally absorbed by the process of mark-making to music. Some groups requested that this activity was repeated up to 10 times with different sound tracks.
10. Some Headway clients were insistent on having their Support Workers share their workshop achievements with their family members, so helping to bridge conversations to their home environments.
11. A PhD student at Exeter University wrote a paper for Cultural Geographies In Practice Journal: "Performative falling as 'resilience in action': reimagining choreographies of falling and rising through Scension Dance Day".
12. The charities United Response and Headway Devon have been promoted to significant audiences, raising their profiles and supporting them with awareness and fund-raising.

Outcomes and impacts – *Tree Of Hope*

1. Facilitated 17 Creative Wellbeing Workshops (½ days) with clients of charities United Response in Paignton (4) & Honiton (4) & Headway Devon in Exeter (1) & Honiton (8).
2. Client Gary described how the workshops gave him space without judgment and commented that: "I used to do art work before I had the stroke, you coming today has really brought things back. It has been really brilliant. I haven't done a lot of things since my stroke and being able to just have a go, it's just woken me up a little bit."
3. Meg, one of the Headway Support Workers, explained how the workshops helped to bridge different parts of the community and reduce feelings of isolation, allowing clients to mix with different people outside of the groups they usually spend time with. Meg commented "I think a lot of clients lack confidence as they think they have a disability so they can't, or have been told they can't. With things like this, they're surprised by what they can do."
4. Several thousand leaves were co-created in a mark-making activities that built up connection and cooperation between participants.
5. These leaves, that were decorated on one side, were then left in public spaces for others to write messages of hope. Sometimes we would make 500 leaves in a day and they would be all 'used up' by the public in just 3 days!
6. Messages of hope cover a diverse range, from the deeply personal (health of a loved one) through to themes that affect the planet (global warming, litter, Covid)
7. Many people found it utterly absorbing to read the messages of hope that had been left by others, spending a long time at the Tree Of Hope.
8. I led 3 workshops in Exeter Cathedral with school children and facilitated conversation around the theme of the sculptures, encouraging pupils to share their thoughts rather than giving them the 'right' answer. Pupils made leaves for the *Tree Of Hope*.
9. The *Tree Of Hope* keeps getting requested. It has been sited at Exeter Cathedral, The Royal Devon & Exeter Hospital, The University of Exeter and MakeTank.
10. Many people have helped to make the *Tree Of Hope*. Vicki took my hand-drawn design and turned it into a digital file for laser-cutting. Dave and Keith assembled it for the first time, without clear instructions, against the clock. Lizzie, Elliott, Nigel, Akinola, Ophelia and Olya helped to disassemble and reassemble the sculpture as it toured.